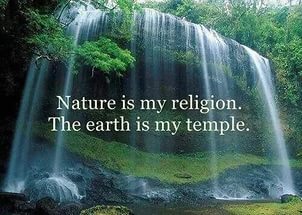
**National parks of Russia and Britain**

*When the beautiful morning comes  
The rays of rising sun kiss her  
When the garden of nature open its heart  
The garden of flowers hugs her to welcome  
When the trees dance to tune of wind  
The birds singing to the nature's choir  
When the gentleness of nature is filled pleasure  
Then the earth get wet with weather  
When the nature forgets its vastness  
Then the God shows her how big her place on earth  
Let us thank God for his creation and given us  
eyes to see lovely gift - Nature*



The oldest parks in Russia are Sochinsky and  Losiny Ostrov (1983); Samarskaya Luka (1984); Mariy Chorda (1985); Bashkiriya, Prielbrusye, Pribaykalsky, and Zabaykalsky(1986).

According to the law on the protected areas of Russia, national parks are areas of land and water devoted to nature protection, ecological education, and scientific research. They contain sites of particular ecological, historical and aesthetic value. Regulated tourism is permitted. The area of each park is divided into zones according to various functions. There should be a strictly protected area managed as a zapovednik, and also recreational and buffer zones in which economic activity is allowed, such as tourism, traditional land use, and benign forms of agriculture and forestry. The strictly protected function is sometimes fulfilled by a neighbouring official zapovednik; for instance, Barguzi Zapovedddnik  and Zabaykalsky National Park on the east side of Lake BaikalLake. In 2001 Vodlozersky National Park  received UNESCO Biosphere  status, followed by Smolenskoye Poozerye and Ugra National Park in 2002. The newest park is Bikin National Park, created in late 2015.

National parks are a comparatively new form of environment protection in Russia. Creation of national parks on the territory of the country started in the early 80`s of the 20th century, and at the moment there are 35 parks of this type. The majority of Russian national parks are located in the European part of the country; the westernmost park – the Curonian Spit – is in the Kaliningrad Region. There are 6 national parks in Siberia with half of them concentrated in the Baikal Region but in the Far East, for instance, there are no national parks at all.

Unlike nature sanctuaries, national parks have not only nature protection functions, but also recreational ones. A holiday in national parks is one of the most popular directions for European and American citizens while in Russia tourists have a slight idea about the differences between ecological tourism and simple outdoor rest. Classic ecological tours are generally aimed at ecological enlightenment of tourists, although it also implies getting acquainted with the historical past of the dwellers of the region, with their traditional way of life, folklore. Oriented on various types of travellers ecological tours may include both elements of active tourism with camping or “civilized” accommodation in holiday hotels and tourist bases including multiple excursions.

The period of national park establishment in Russia is not long enough to boast a variety of educational routes, and in a number of parks the sphere of tourist services is in the formation state. The access to the territory of national parks is regulated according to location of natural and historical-cultural objects. There are nature zones unavailable for tourists; zones of educational tourism – for organization of ecological enlightenment and getting acquainted with the main sightseeings of the national park; there are also special zones for recreation providing licensed fishing; zones of accommodation and informational services where one usually can find guest houses and tourist bases.

The first national park was created in Russia in 1983 – it is Sochi National Park. Located in the north-western part of the Bigger Caucasus, the park is unique due to the fact that no elsewhere in Russia subtropics and uplands coexist so closely. Multiple excursions organized by the Sochi resorts have made the national park a leader in the number of annual visits. More than one hundred of monuments of history and culture are registered on the park’s territory: from the Old Stone Age to the medieval ages, including ancient settlements, dolmens, and ruins.

Prielbrusye National Park situated in Caucasus is recognized as one of the mountain skiing centres. There are also excursions to Narzans Valley and mineral water sources for the guests of the mineral water resorts. In the area of the Azau meadow on the territory of the national park there is an ecological path where tourists can get geological knowledge have a chance to enjoy a variety of changing landscapes

Only few people know that Russia has one of the world’s premier systems of protected areas. It preserves millions of acres of wild landscapes, which are home to a countless number of plants and animals. In Russia there are 101 nature reserves (zapovedniks) covering about 1.4% of the country’s total area – from the tundra in the far north to the steppe in the south, from the Black Sea to the Bering Sea.

Read our subjective list of the greatest nature reserves in Russia!

Altaisky Zapovednik

The Altay Reserve is situated in south-central Russia, on a joint of Altay, Sayan and Tuva ranges. The Altay region is one of the oldest areas of human settlement in all of Russia and Asia. Its territory is covered with more than 1100 lakes, with Teletskoe Lake being the biggest and the most beautiful one. The vast territory of the Reserve is home to numerous plant and animal species, including wolf, fox, brown bear and the snow leopard (listed on the Red List of Threatened Species). The territory of Altai Nature Reserve is on the list of  UNESCO entitled “Golden Mountains of Altai“.  Altai Mountains are often compared to the Alps, but they’re way more wild than their European equivalent. Tourism activity in this area is limited, but if you love breathtaking landscapes, silence, hiking and trekking – this is [the place for you](http://explorussia.com/item/tailor-made-tour/).

[](http://explorussia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ExploRussia_Russia_Nature_Reserves_Altai_byPavelKazachkov.jpg)

Baikalsky Zapovednik

Located in southern Buryatia, around the world’s oldest and deepest lake, Baikal Nature Reserve is one of the most stunning and most important nature reserves in Russia. It hosts dark pine taiga, subalpine meadows, alpine tundras among other types of forests. Zapovednik is home to over 300 species of animals and 800 species of plants, many of which are rare or endemic (can be found only there). Baikal Nature Reserve is also known for developing new types of tourism, including ecotourism, birdwatching and wildlife tracking, as well as investments in modern tourism infrastructure. Lake Baikal itself is inscribed as the UNESCO World Heritage Site, as the most outstanding example of a freshwater ecosystem on the basis of natural criteria. Many of those who visited this area, hopelessly fell in love with Lake Baikal.[](http://explorussia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ExploRussia_Russia_Nature_Reserves_Baikal_by1.jpg)

Great Arctic Zapovednik

Great Arctic Nature Reserve is Eurasia’s largest protected area (and one of the largest in the world). Located in Krasnoyarsk Krai impresses with its unique landscapes of arctic deserts and arctic tundra. Major parts of its territory remained undisturbed by humans, but became home to numerous animal species such as Polar bears, walruses, reindeer, beluga and even rare migratory birds. The Great Arctic Zapovednik is possibly one of the most unique nature reserves in the world, with wildlife population that you will unlikely see anywhere else. [Visit to this area](http://explorussia.com/item/tailor-made-tour/) will undoubtedly be an adventure of a lifetime!

[](http://explorussia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ExploRussia_Nature_Reserves_GreatArctic_by-destination-artciccircles.jpg)

Kurilsky Zapovednik

**Kurilsky Nature Reserve** is located in Sakhalin Oblast region, the easternmost part of Russia, exactly on the boarder with Japan. The Kuril Islands is a volcanic archipelago, arced between Kamchatka and the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, which consists of 56 variously sized islands, **and contain over 100 volcanoes**, 39 of which are currently active. Famous for its unique and pristine nature, the archipelago is one of the last biologically unknown places in the world. The biggest part of the Kurilsky Nature Reserve lies on the **Kunashir Island**, which in 70% is occupied by forests. Part of the island, **Cape Stolbchaty**, famous for its unique rock formations along a vertical cliff,  is listed as the **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The Kuril Islands have some of the **world’s richest fishing grounds**, but at the same time – overfishing of seafood, along with ongoing gold mining and mineral explorations are its biggest threats. The islands are not popular among travellers, which makes it even more attractive, and volcano climbing there will be a truly unforgettable experience!

[](http://explorussia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ExploRussia_Nature_Reserves_KurilIslands_By-The-Space-Station1.jpg)

Sikhote-Alinsky Zapovednik

Sikhote-Alinsky Nature Reserve is located in the southern parts of the Russian Far East. Zapovednik is famous for  its picturesque terrain forms and exceptional biodiversity. The combination of boreal and subtropical forests results in a great variety of plant and animal life, including 320 bird and almost 400 mushroom species. But most importantly, in these remote forested mountains in extreme southeastern Siberia, along the coast of the Sea of [Japan](http://explorussia.com/item/the-kuril-islands-adventure-tour/), live endangered [Siberian (Amur) tigers](http://explorussia.com/blog-tracking-wildlife-in-russia-meet-tigers-leopards-bears-and-walruses/). Sikhote-Alinsky Zapovednik plays possibly the most significant role of any reserve in protecting this species and their natural habitat. Conservation projects are run by this Zapovednik in cooperation with several NGOs, like [ALTA](http://www.altaconservation.org/) and [WCS](http://www.wcs.org/). Perceived as one of the world’s greatest wildlife reserves, is definitely a place to visit by real adventure seekers and wild cats lovers.

[](http://explorussia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ExploRussia_Russia_Nature_Reserves_KurilIslands_byTambakoTheJaguar1.jpg)

## England

## http://www.bbc.co.uk/staticarchive/fa5013c9f3834c6d90d1ce227282c69ef6df5e08.png

* **Peak District**

The Peak District lies mainly within northern Derbyshire but is also covers parts of Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and Staffordshire. The Peak District, established in 1951, was the first national park to be designated as such in the United Kingdom. The landscape in the Peak District consists mainly of rounded hills and gritstone escarpments.



Hope Valley, Peak District National Park, Derbyshire

* **Lake District**

The  Lake District is a popular holiday destination due to the beauty of its lakes, forests and mountains. The park is famous for its associations with the nineteenth century poet, William Wordsworth. Located in the county of Cumbria, the park contains not only the highest mountain in England, Scafell Pike, but also the longest lake in England - Windermere Lake and its deepest lake - Wastwater.



Lake Scenery, The Lake District, North West England

* **Dartmoor**

Dartmoor National Park is a 954 square kilometers wide expanse of moorland located in Devon, England. The exposed granite hilltops called tors are lovely to behold and provide habitats for moorland wildlife. This park includes the largest area of granite in England with nearly 625 square kilometers at the surface level.



Haytor, Dartmoor National Park, Devon

* **North York Moors**

North York Moors National Park, situated in North Yorkshire, contains one of the largest areas of heather moorland in England. Established as a national park in 1952, it has become an attractive and enjoyable tourist destination. The park comprises over 1,400 miles of moorland, pine forests and rolling hills. Many kinds of wildlife such as badgers, deer and hawks can be found within the park.

* **Yorkshire Dales**

Yorkshire Dales National Park was established in 1954 and is located in the upland area of Northern England. There is a collection of river valleys, heather moorland and rolling hills to be enjoyed. Moreover, extensive cave systems are present throughout the park, making it one of the most famous caving areas in the UK.

* **Exmoor**

Exmoor National Park is a hilly open moorland located around west Somerset and north Devon. The park was originally an ancient royal hunting forest that was then donated and designated as a national park in 1954. The park includes some of the highest sea cliffs in England, which can reach up to 314 meters in height. The scenic rock headlands, ravines and waterfalls gained recognition as a Heritage Coast in 1991.



Exmoor National Park, Devon, England

* **Northumberland**

Northumberland National Park is one of the least visited and least populated national parks in the UK. The park lies entirely within Northumberland and was established as a national park in 1956. 10,000 years of history can be explored within the park including sites such as Prehistoric monuments and Roman remains.

* **The Broads**

The Broads are formed of a network of rivers and lakes located in the English counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. Since the 19th century, the park has been a popular boating holiday destination. Many kinds of visitors including artists, anglers and bird-watchers have been attracted to spending their holidays boating on the Broads. It has also been an important center for racing yachts since the 19th century.

* **New Forest**

The New Forest is one of the largest remaining expanses of unenclosed grazing land in southeast England. The landscapes in the park consist of woodlands, heather-covered heaths, rivers, valley mires and historic villages. A wide variety of wildlife such as bats, roe deer and sand lizards live in the park.

* **South Downs**

The South Downs National Park, the newest national park in England, became fully operational in 2011. The park covers an area of over 1,600 square kilometers stretching from Winchester in the west to Hampshire in the east. Rolling pastures, woodlands and river valleys are spread around the park for visitors to view and enjoy.

## Scotland

* **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park**

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is located mainly around Loch Lomond, Scotland. It consists of several ranges of hills, out of which the most famous is called the Trossachs. The park was established in 2002 and became the first designated national park in Scotland. A great variety of wildlife can be discovered at the park such as otters, ospreys and water voles.



Loch Lomond, Scotland

* **Cairngorms National Park**

Cairngorms National Park lies north east of Scotland and was designated as a national park in 2003. Being the largest national park in the United Kingdom, it is nearly two times larger than the Lake District. The park's spectacular landscapes are formed of tall mountain ranges and the surrounding hills.

## Wales

* **Snowdonia**

Snowdonia, located in the north of Wales, became the first designated national park in Wales. The northernmost part of the park is most popular with tourists because here rise the three tallest mountains in Wales including: Snowdon Massif, Glyderau and the Carneddau. The park was established in 1951 and derived the name, 'Snowdonia', from the mountain 'Snowdon Massif'.



Snowdonia National Park, Wales

* **Pembrokeshire Coast**

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was established as a national park in 1952. Located alongside the Pembrokeshire coast in west Wales, the park is made up of rocky cliffs, sandy beaches and wild inlands. Rare rock structures such as natural arches, stacks and sea caves have also been found within the park.

* **Brecon Beacons**

The Brecon Beacons is a wide mountain range situated in south Wales. Established in 1957, it is the third established of the three national parks in Wales. A major part of the national park is a grassy Moorland where herds of Welsh ponies and sheep can be seen wandering about. Visitors have the opportunity to mountain bike, camp out, rock climb and